

# INDIANS OF THE CANAL LANDS

By Jill Bowman, S. Foster School #67, Indianapolis, Indiana; July, 1998

**Topic:** Indians of northern Indiana before the canals were built.

**Estimated time:** 3 - half hour sessions

**Grade levels:** K - 5

**Purpose:** To introduce students to the Indian tribes of central and northern Indiana

**Geography Standards addressed:**

SPATIAL CONCEPTS: 1. How to use maps and other geographic representations,

PLACES: 4. The physical and human characteristics of places,

HUMAN SYSTEMS: 9. The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface, 12. The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement. 13. How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface,

ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY: 14. How human actions modify the physical environment,

USES OF GEOGRAPHY: 17. How to apply geography to interpret the past.

**Objectives:** Upon completion of this activity, students will be able to

- Name the Indian tribes of northern and central Indianas
- Give reasons why the pioneers would build their towns on the same land that the Indians had.
- Tell why the Indians were forced to leave their homelands.
- Discuss the value of the canal system.

**Background:** There were numerous Woodland tribes living in Indiana during the period just before the building of the canals (c. 1830's). These tribes were forced to leave their homelands as the canal became reality across north central Indiana. Some of these tribes included: the Wea, Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Ottawa, and the Chippewa.

**Materials required:**

- An Indiana road map for each small group
- Large pieces of 18 X 24 construction paper, crayons or markers
- Map of Indiana showing the waterways (both labeled and unlabeled)
- Map of Indiana showing the canals.

**Procedures:**

1. Brainstorm a list of Indian terms that the children know including the names of towns and rivers.
2. Make sure everyone understands the terms from #1 and that words such as wickiup and canoe are included.
3. In small groups, draw an Indian village. Children should be sure to include (or construct) a waterway and any other physical feature the group wishes. It must include a river, five houses (wickiups), a canoe, a council house, and the name.
4. Use the Indiana map showing the waterways. Discuss where the Indians might have lived in Indiana in the early days. Have children place their village names on the map.
5. Then, discuss the map of Indiana which shows the route of the various canals.
6. Overlay a map of the state showing the major cities at this time. Discuss the relationship of the pioneer Europeans to the Native Americans at this time in history.

**Questions:**

Why did the Indians build their villages on waterways?

How did the pioneers change the Indian lands?

Did the pioneers build their towns at the same places that the Indians had? Why?

**Assessment:**

Grade the Indian villages informally based on the criteria listed in procedure in #3.

Have children write a picture letter to a friend. They should tell about life in their village.

**Extensions:**

Celebrate their villages by displaying the maps and stories in a central location of the school.

**Resources:**

Indiana maps are available through the IUPUI office of Cartographic Services or on-line.